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BY
ADACHI KINNOSUKE

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CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN JAPAN

MANY things have been said of the foreign missionary work, some of them extravagant, most of them unkindly, a few witty, sparkling, cutting, and in many cases wrong.

This, frankly, is no defense of the foreign missions; it is not even a Christian view of the work. I am a Japanese by birth —a mere heathen. It is, therefore, an impression of an outsider pure and simple, and these I know to be facts.

Forty-odd years ago, at every gate to both the Flower Capital of the mikado and Yedo, city of the shogun, at many of the entrances to the towns and villages of Nippon, there stood a large notice-board. It was official. In bold, heavy, black, fat strokes, so that he who ran on the highway might read, was the following:

KIRISHITAN JASHUMONNO GIWA, KOREMADENOTORI KATAKU KINSEINO KOTO!

That is to say:

"The evil sect Kirishitan [Christian] is firmly forbidden as hitherto!"

To-day you may see a few of the same old notice-boards, and read the same historic inscription, but you must go to the Tokio Museum to find them. They are no longer on the streets. Thirty-five years ago there were eleven baptized Protestant Christians. To-day there are seventy thousand of them in Japan; they own 600 churches; in their Sunday-schools they teach 100,000 children.

Is this the fruit of the Christian missions in Japan? Certainly. But not the only result, and not the most important.

Fifty years ago there was no such expression as "religious freedom" in the entire range of Nippon literature. To-day the phrase has been written into the constitution of the land. Less than fifty years ago, if you wished to have a free fight on the spot, without loss of time, all that you had to do was to call a gentleman a "Yaso" —that is to say, "Jesus." And to-day? Admiral Uriu, who battered the fine Russian cruiser *Variag* in the harbor of Chemulpo, is a Christian; and many other officers of the navy and army of Japan of to-day are proud to be called Yaso. The editors of some of the leading metropolitan dailies are Christians. In 1890, when the Imperial Diet was convened for the first time in the history of Japan, the House of Representatives had a Christian for its president.

His Majesty the Emperor of Japan contributes regularly to the funds of the Young Men's Christian Association. To-day no one can irritate a Japanese by calling him Yaso. These are some of the fruits of the missionary work in Japan. Not *the* fruit, however.

Away back in the early seventies of the last century,—in those days when the new

VICE-ADMIRAL URIU

He studied at the United States Naval Academy, married a Japanese who was a Christian and was graduated at Vassar, and during the war with Russia held high command under Admiral Togo.

Nippon was being born,—there was a time when the empire went drunk on the heady wine of Occidental civilization. To know something about the wonderful West, out of which came those wonderful black ships of war which had compelled the powerful shogunate to do its sweet pleasure, was the order of the day. Every daimio, or lord of a

DR. GUIDO F. VERBECK

ADVISER, TRANSLATOR, PREACHER, EDUCATOR.

Decorated by the Mikado with the Third Class of the Imperial Order of the Rising Sun, in honor of his eminent services to the New Japan.

clan, established a school where foreign languages and sciences were to be taught.

Our lord of Kumamoto clan also established one. But how to secure a foreign instructor who would teach the Western knowledge to the children of the samurai of Kumamoto, there was the rub, and more especially because the lord of the Kumamoto clan was particular. The clan of Kumamoto, as all the empire knew, was proud of two things, its historic castle, built by Kato Kiyomasa, and the heroic tradition of its warriors as brave as the builder of the castle. It was all very well for other effete clans to employ foreign bonzes—that is to say, missionaries —as instructors to their young men; but not for Kumamoto. The clan of Kumamoto must have a soldier for its instructor. No priest, no mere man of letters who was little better than a woman; he would hurt the *esprit de corps* of the clan. All these emphatic wishes of the lord of Kumamoto clan were, therefore, detailed to Dr. G. F. Verbeck, who was a sort of national adviser in such matters, and on his recommendation Captain L. L. Janes went to teach the young samurai of Kumamoto.

Most assuredly the captain was no bonze. But it was also true that, in comparison with that white-flaming tower of zeal for God that was in his bosom, an every-day missionary would have looked

like a penny candle flickering and fading before a typhoon. Captain Janes was a soldier, and an officer, of course. In a thousand times more emphatic sense, however, he was a soldier of the Cross.

For nearly three years Captain Janes said nothing of Christianity to his Kumamoto boys. Think of the apostlic ardor such as that of Captain Janes looking upon silence as golden, and for three patient years! How could he have managed it? The entire credit, I am half afraid, does not belong either to the miraculous patience or to the still more wonderful wisdom and tact of Captain Janes. For one thing, he could not speak Japanese well enough to preach the gospel in it, and his students could not understand English. But as of yore,

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.

Because he could not preach with words. Captain Janes lived out a Christ-life in his every-day actions. And I believe no sermon has ever been known to be quite eloquent enough to compare to the eloquence of a simple Christian life. And the magic eloquence of it touched the hearts of the rugged children of the Kumamoto samurai. "He gave his whole strength,"

writes one of his old pupils, recalling those Kumamoto days, "teaching English and the sciences. But he was so kind and fatherly in his treatment of his pupils that they came to forget that he was a foreigner." Let me put it in another way: the three years' wordless work of the captain built a bridge over which his thoughts could pass into the understanding, not only mental, but sentimental as well, of his boys. Therefore at the end of three years one day he said to his students: "I shall teach the Bible on Sunday. Any one who wishes may come to my house."

In this short sentence the historian will find one of the foundation-rocks of the Christian Church in Japan.

"We still hated Christianity," writes Mr. Kamamori, one of Captain Janes's pupils, and who later became famous as the Paul of the Japanese missions because of the persecution he suffered for his faith and of the zeal with which he devoted his life to the work of Christ, "as though it were a snake, and did not like even to see a Bible; but we so respected him that we concluded to go to the meeting. One of us went to the teacher of Chinese [a teacher of Chinese in those days was also a preceptor in the doctrine and teachings of Confucius, for the Japanese boys all studied classic Chinese with

the sacred books of Confucius as their readers] and asked his consent. He replied that

From a lithograph lent by Dr. W. E. Griffis.

WAKASA—THE FIRST PROTESTANT CHRISTIAN IN JAPAN

He was a pupil of Dr. G. F. Verbeck.

we might go to learn about Christianity, not to believe it, but to study its strong and

weak points in order to oppose it. And so of the few who went some went simply out of curiosity, others for amusement, others that they might oppose, none with the desire to accept it. During his prayer, which seemed tedious to us, we sometimes opened our eyes and looked upon his face, with its closed and tearful eyes, and then we laughed, saying, 'Even Americans weep!'"

For another year, patiently, always backed by his Christian life, a thing which was both new and wonderful to the Kumamoto boys, Captain Janes taught them the Bible. He never asked the young men to become Christians. Two of the boys tried to impose upon his judgment; they went to him one day and said, "We wish to become preachers of the gospel." He told them bluntly that they were not worthy to be anything of the kind—a rather striking contrast with certain other missionaries and their methods. The sharp, unexpected contrast impressed the young men. In 1875—that is to say, at the end of about one year's Bible-teaching—his work began to tell. It divided the Kumamoto school into two camps, one eager for the light that was in Christ and his life, and the other which tried to crush the pro-Christian elements by reviving the study of the sacred texts of

Confucius. The teacher of Chinese was active in the work. Every Sunday morning he expounded the teachings of the great sage of China. For a time every Sabbath the students went to the teacher in Chinese in the morning and in the afternoon to Captain Janes. Then Captain Janes added preaching to his study of the Bible. "His sermons were long," writes one who attended,—"sometimes three hours long,—but as we had become interested in Christianity, they were never tiresome to us."

Soon after, these Kumamoto boys, who had never in all their lives even so much as heard of the word "revival," had the visitation of the Spirit that was Pentecostal. "We wondered why our spirits burned like a fire and why we preached the gospel like mad men. One said, 'May not this be the work of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Bible?'"

And the classic city of Kumamoto was treated to the greatest scandal in all its ancient life. "What," said the people in utter consternation, "are our own children —the children of samurai—turning into *Yaso bozu* [that is to say, Christian priests]?" "Can such things be borne with patience and in silence? And how are we to apologize to the ghosts of our ancestors?" The widowed mother of one of the

boys tried to commit suicide to apologize to the spirit of her departed husband because she had failed to rear the son in the virile and noble path of the samurai. A father told his son, in a calm and very solemn manner, to go out to the porch leading down to the garden.

"My son," said the father, "since you do not renounce the evil faith, I shall do you the honor, which you scarcely merit, of putting an end to your life with my own sword. That is the least apology which you and I can make to the memory of our august ancestors."

"If it be for the sake of the Way," the son made answer, "let it be so, Father above."

Seating himself on the edge of the porch, polished like a mirror and without a railing, the son stretched forth his neck to receive the blow from the father's blade. The father looked at the son fixedly for a moment. From the first he had no idea of murdering the son; he wished to test the extent of fanaticism of his boy, as he considered it.

"Kono bakayaro!" cried the father. That is to say, "You big fool you!" I am sure the old gentleman would have put in a choice touch of profanity, if only the Jap-

anese language had had a "cuss" word; but of course it had not.

So saying, he kicked the son off the porch to the garden flag and left him in disgust. Persecution raged, and had precisely the same effect as in the cradle days of the Christian Church.

It was the last Sunday in the first month of the year of grace 1876, and the spring-like Kyushu weather was all a-smile. The Christian students of the Kumamoto school went out to a hill to the southwest of the castle city called Hana-oka yama, or the Hill-in-bloom. Seating themselves in a circle on the crest of the hill, they banded themselves under solemn oaths. Let other young men chase the will-o'-the-wisp of worldly wealth and honors, let others aspire to the noble work of the defense of the Home Land of the Sun, of carrying forward the torch of civilization, but for the Kumamoto boys, however, none of these things. There was one thing to which they would devote their entire lives—the spiritual rebirth of the empire of Nippon; nothing less.

This, then, is the story of the famous Kumamoto Band, which helped to lay the foundation of Christian work in Japan.

It was in the city of Kioto, and the time was the summer of 1875. Two men sat

talking in a humble cottage that might have commanded the monthly rental of ten dollars at the most. It was specially modest for the two gentlemen who sat and talked therein, for one of them was Mr. (later Viscount) Tanaka, who was then the active head of the Department of Education of the newly formed Imperial government and the other was Dr. Neesima.

"I have come," Mr. Tanaka was saying, "to press a strong claim of our country upon you. You know as well as I through what a critical hour our country is passing at present. It is the one season in a thousand autumns. If ever Nippon needed her sons to come to her rescue, now is the time. I need not 'preach to the Buddha;' you know all this. You know the West and Western civilization and its institutions; your knowledge of them would be invaluable to the government. The country has sore need of you."

"This is indeed an honor for which I am utterly unworthy," Mr. Neesima made answer, "and believe me, I have no words to express my appreciation for your kindly suggestion; but—"

"Ah," said the head of the Department of Education, "I have been afraid of that 'but' of yours. I have been afraid that you might say it."

"Yes, I regret to say—"

"Wait," interrupted the other. "Whether you decline or whether you accept, you should not act on so weighty a matter as this so quickly. Would it not be well for you to think the matter over thoroughly, look upon the situation from all possible angles? If you like, discuss the matter with me. Many things can be said both for and against your accepting such a governmental position as I have suggested."

So it came to pass that the two friends sat down to discuss the question, the official ever urging Mr. Neesima to take up an important work for the state. He was one of the closest friends of Dr. Neesima, and the way they first met was at once singular and dramatic.

It was at Washington, District of Columbia, and Mr. Tanaka was then with the famous Iwakura Embassy, in the year 1872, perhaps the most significant year in the history of the new Nippon since the restoration of the actual sovereignty to the emperor. It was the second and by far the most important embassy sent abroad by the newly formed imperial régime. Okubo and Kido were the leading spirits of it, the two great and magic names to conjure with in those days. Ito (the late Prince Ito) was also one of the members of the commission. The

embassy was "first to study the institutions of the civilized nations, adopt those most suited to Japan, and gradually reform our government and manners, so as to attain the status equal to that of the most civilized nations." There was no lack of brains among the men of the embassy. One thing was missing, however, the gift of tongue. The embassy needed an interpreter, and needed him badly. In this sore hour of need, they were told that there was a school in a town called Andover, in the State of Massachusetts, and in it was a Japanese student. He was reported to be studying the "science of God." It was plain that he could handle this trying invention of the darker power called the English language.

It did not take those wise gentlemen from Japan many minutes to decide on their course of action. At once they summoned the theological student with all the authority of the Imperial government, with which they were vested. He did not answer post-haste and in person, as the gentlemen of the commission confidently expected. Instead, there came a letter. It was one of the most remarkable documents they had ever read, and they had seen all sorts of things in their day. For audacity and frankness it surpassed a dun for a ten-year-old debt. For the dictatorial tone of it, the writer, a hum-

ble student, even if he were presumptuous enough to be studying the "science of God," might have been the Czar of all the Russias. And he explained in the said remarkable letter that he was an outlaw, according to the laws of Japan in the days when he had left it.

The outlaw had "the nerve" to dictate terms to the imperial embassy!

He was willing, he said, to serve the embassy as an interpreter, but, in the first place, the imperial commission must recognize him as an honorable and upright citizen of Nippon. He had not committed any other crime than to run away from the country with the sole desire of studying the institutions of America. (That act was punishable by death, according to the laws of the shogun's government.) The imperial commissioners must greet him as an equal, and must not expect him to fall upon his forhead, as was the usage at the court of Japan. That was not all: the embassador must shake hands with the writer after the most approved American fashion! There were many more demands of this sort.

What could the embassy do? It accepted all the demands unconditionally, and Mr. Neesima joined the Iwakura Embassy. It was there that he came to know Viscount Tanaka; with him he traveled all through

Europe and America; the report on the educational work of Europe and America presented to the throne by the embassy on its return was based on the joint investigations of the two men.

Thus the two friends of former days sat in the humble Kioto cottage of Dr. Neesima.

Did Neesima wish to propagate the Christian faith among the Japanese? Would his high standing among the officers of the government hurt such a work? Was there, could there be, any more effective method than to become a great national factor himself, and then bring about the spiritual salvation of Japan, and show to all the people that a Christian can at one and the same time be a patriot as well? Viscount Tanaka sat with Neesima and talked for three days and two nights.

To all the arguments of his friend, Dr. Neesima had nothing more to say than this: "I have only one answer: my life is not my own. It belongs to Jesus Christ. Many years ago I solemnly swore to devote my entire time and effort to his cause. I cannot take back my words and my heart. I cannot do it."

As twilight was purpling on the historic hills of Kioto, fragrant with the memory of a thousand years of culture, Viscount Tan-

aka rose. He had reached the end of his patience. He was a simple-hearted man. He was a patriot; he could not understand the language of the man of religion. How could he? Without the slightest hesitation, he would have sacrificed all the Buddhas in the world and his life as well if they could but add even a trifle to the prestige and power of the state. He was disgusted with the attitude of Neesima. He was "mad," clean mad."

"Well, Neesima," he said, "I'm going. I am sorry. You are indeed the slave of Jesus Christ. Good-by."

And years ago, when I was a schoolboy in Tokio, I heard Professor J. D. Davis say, telling this story, that it was "the proudest title ever given to man."

The cottage in which the two men talked became the foundation of the Doshisha University of to-day, away and beyond the greatest Christian university in the Far East.

And Dr. Neesima lived a Christian life. It stamped the age in which he lived; it colored the history of his country.

Tokutomi Iichiro, the editor and founder of the *Kokumin,* one of the leading metropolitan dailies in Tokio to-day, is one of the Doshisha boys who has always car-

ried the moral crest of the Neesima clan. At the death of Neesima he wrote:

"Individually, we have lost him to whom we looked, as to a father and teacher, for strength and light and love. . . . As a society we have lost the leader of the cause of moral reformation in Japan. . . . An elaborate eulogy, a magnificent funeral, a splendid monument—these would not please him. Far better is it for us to do our daily duty, to help forward little by little, with our whole heart and life, the moral regeneration of society, that our land may be the home of men and women loving liberty, truth, charity, and God."

I do not know whether the name of Tokutomi Iichiro is on the membership list of a Christian Church, and it matters little. I do not know whether Tokutomi understood the Christian creed as Mr. Neesima did; this also matters not so much. For it is true that many of the people whose lives have been modified by the life of Neesima do not even know the difference between the Congregational and the Unitarian churches.

What I do know is that Onchi Seiran was in no way connected with the Christian Church. At the time of Mr. Neesima's death he was one of the shining lights of the Buddhistic sect called Shinshu, in the

city of Tokyo. To the students and the family of Mr. Neesima he wrote:

"Having been informed in the newspaper of the death of Mr. Neesima, president of your school, I am full of heartfelt grief. Since I am a believer in the faith of Buddhism, I stood opposed to him . . . but in regard to his stirring the religious heart of our people with his zeal I have no doubt. I was especially impressed with this when I once called on him . . . it seemed to me at that time that if I was not a believer in Buddhism I should have become his friend and accepted Christianity. All who are the ministers of any religion must become as he was."

Inspiring the imagination of the new Nippon with the charm and nobility of the character of Jesus—that certainly was the greatest achievement of Mr. Neesima. He made his countrymen fall in love with the life of Jesus as Neesima himself lived it out in the Kioto of the seventies.

Neesima and his fellow workers, notably Professor J. D. Davis, upon whom Mr. Neesima was wont to lean as upon the very staff of life, gave Japan a new national ideal. No achievements of man can be greater, more ambitious than this. In this the missionaries succeeded. Here, then, is

the great fruit of the Christian missions in Japan.

When our foreign friends came to us and told us to open up the country for international intercourse of all sorts, the elders of the shogunate did not like it. When Commodore Perry told us to open up our country whether we wished to or no, some of our forefathers lost their temper. We have changed our mind a good deal on that point. We look back upon the day when the black ships of the American navy got on the nerves of our old forefathers so dreadfully as the day of glorious fortune. And the thing which made us change our mind was the life lived among us by the gentlemen who came to us in the name of Jesus, their Master.

And for this reason: many of the missionaries who came to Japan in those early days were scholars long before they were missionaries, and they were MEN (and all the capitals in the language can not possibly do them justice) long before they were scholars.

Take Dr. Verbeck, Dr. Hepburn, Bishop Williams, Professor J. D. Davis, Dr. S. R. Brown of Yokohoma, Bishop Harris and the Rev. J. H. De Forest of Sendai, Professor Clark of Supporo Agricultural Col-

lege, Professor William Elliot Griffis of Fukui Gakko and the author of the *Mikado's Empire*, and Captain Janes of Kumamoto Ei-gakko.

DR. JAMES C. HEPBURN

Went to Asia, 1841. In Japan, 1859-1892. Physician, translator, author, educator. Decorated by the Mikado with the Third Class of the Imperial Order of the Rising Sun, in recognition of his great services.

Perhaps this is not a long list. It should not be. Great men never did grow like weeds anywhere at any time. The wonder is that so many of the really great of earth

should have found their way into the then almost unknown land of Nippon.

And it was the Christlike life of these men, not their theology, which told so stupendously for the cause of the Christian missions in Japan.

On the fifth of October, 1909, in the city of Tokyo, a number of Christians, and a number of those who were not, gathered to celebrate the "Semi-Centennial of Protestant Christianity in Japan." Count Okuma was one of the many non-Christians present. As usual, what he said had a national and world-wide significance:

"I came in contact with and received great impulses from some of the missionaries of that early period. Particularly from Dr. Verbeck. He was my teacher in English and history and the Bible. I can never forget the great and virtuous influence of the man. At that time Dr. Verbeck could do but little direct evangelical work, but all his work was Christian. In everything he did his Christlike spirit was revealed. . . . *Only by the coming of the West in its missionary representatives and by the spread of the gospel* did the nation enter upon world-wide thoughts and world-wide work."

Here, then, is Count Okuma's answer to the question, What is the greatest fruit of

the Christian missionary work in Japan? Count Okuma is not a professing Christian or a member of a Christian Church. There are others like him. And the life and work

COUNT OKUMA

Ex-Premier of Japan, founder and President of the Waseda University.

of just such men as Count Okuma have told on the life of the nation in a much more

potent fashion than figures and adjectives know how to show.

The *Kokumin,* the prominent Tokyo daily to which I have referred before, devoted almost two columns and a half to the editorial comment on the Semi-Centennial celebration of the misionary work in Japan in its issue of October 5, 1909. It said:

"In this world there is nothing that is as big as the power of character. Especially is it so in religion. The propaganda of the Jesuits of the Genki and Tensho Periods (1570-91) has not left even a shadow on the Japan of to-day. But the life influences of the one great, brilliant star of the movement, Francis Xavier, is still seen here and there like a mountain rill sparkling from under the heaps of dead leaves. I myself know [the editorial was evidently written by Mr. Tokutomi himself] that the influences of such men as Brown of Yokohoma and Janes of Kumamoto in the education of our people . . . was by no means light."

Some missionaries can not understand why the Christian speculative philosophy and systematic theology are not as popular among the Japanese as the "stove-pipe hats" of the year-before-the-last season, which are the chief features of all the social functions in Japan of the transition. Some people think this is because the Japanese do not

have a speculative turn of mind. They are wrong in that. We do not admire the patient work of the schoolmen of the Dark Ages who tried to figure out how many angels could stand on the point of a needle. Our reason for this is entirely different, however, from that of a Wall Street man. We are not too busy, but we find the Occidental speculative philosophy too tame and colorless. Compared to the depth of the Hindu philosophy, it looks like a "teapot tempest." Compared with the Hanayana Sutras, the transcendental idealism of Bishop Berkeley sounds like a lot of nursery rhyme. That is the real reason why the Japanese do not rave over the profundity of Christian thought.

Also there are people who say that the Japanese nature is essentially non-religious. That our attitude toward all the gods and all things religious is "politeness toward possibilities." Anybody can see that that is wrong,—anybody who has read the story of the Christian persecution in Japan and heard of the men and women who marked the blood-trail and charred trail (for there were many native converts who preferred to be burned at the stake rather than renounce their faith in Jesus Christ, their Savior) which led to the horrible struggle of Shimabara and which made Pappenberg

Rock in Nagasaki harbor forever famous in history, for it is the place from which thousands of the native converts were thrown into the sea. Oh, yes, the Japanese nature is highly religious. Both in the number of shrines and of gods, we beat the Athenians upon whom we have St. Paul's pronouncement. Christian missionary work did not deepen the religious nature of the people, but it gave a new star to which it might aspire—the life and character of Jesus.